

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6990

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR MILI AO UG US

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT AMIN: ANGOLA, U.S.-UGANDAN
BILATERAL RELATIONS, AMIN COMMENTARY ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD
AFRICA

REFS: (A) STATE 001376 (B) STATE 001379 (C) NAIROBI 0059

1. AMIN'S REACTION TO U.S. MESSAGE ON ANGOLA. DCM RALPH
LINDSTROM CALLED ON PRESIDENT AMIN IN KAMPALA AT 1000
LOCAL JANUARY 4 TO GIVE HIM LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD AND
AIDE MEMOIRE IN ACCORDANCE INSTRUCTIONS REFS (A) AND (B).
MEETING WAS BOTH TIMELY AND USEFUL FROM U.S. VIEWPOINT.
AMIN EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION WITH CONTENT OF U.S.
POSITION ON ANGOLA AND APPEARED GENUINELY PLEASED TO HAVE
BEEN GIVEN LETTER FROM PRESIDENT FORD. HE SAID LETTER
WOULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL TO HIM IN FENDING OFF ANTI-
CIPATED CRITICISM OF U.S. ANGOLA ROLE BY MPLA SUPPORTERS
AT FORTHCOMING OAU SUMMIT. HE SAID THAT LIBYAN DECISION
JANUARY 3 TO RECOGNIZE MPLA MEANT THAT THERE ARE NOW 20
OAU MEMBERS WHO HAVE TAKEN THIS POSITION, THEREBY
LEAVING 26 WHO HAVE NOT RECOGNIZED ANY OF THREE FACTIONS.
WHILE MANY OF COUNTRIES WHO HAVE RECOGNIZED MPLA HAVE
DONE SO BECAUSE OF "PRO-COMMUNIST" ORIENTATION, AMIN
CLAIMED THAT OTHERS SUCH AS NIGERIA HAD DONE SO FOR TWO
PRINCIPAL REASONS: (1) SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION AND
(2) PRESS REPORTS ALLEGING CIA RECRUITMENT OF U.S.
MERCENARIES. (LINDSTROM ASSURED AMIN THAT THESE STORIES

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WERE WITHOUT FOUNDATION.) AMIN EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THERE

WOULD BE NO STATEMENTS EMANATING FROM U.S. GOVERNMENT EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR UNITA OR FNLA PRIOR TO OAU SUMMIT AS THIS WOULD ONLY PROVIDE AMMUNITION TO THOSE ANXIOUS TO HAVE MPLA DECLARED SOLE GOVERNMENT IN ANGOLA. IMMEDIATELY AFTER MEETING AMIN LEFT FOR AIRPORT TO VISIT LIBERIA AND OTHER WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO SOLICIT SUPPORT FOR HIS POSITION ON ANGOLA.

2. OUTLOOK FOR OAU SUMMIT. WHILE AVOIDING PREDICTION THAT OAU SUMMIT WOULD RESULT IN MAJORITY FAVORABLE TO RESOLUTION ADVOCATING CEASE FIRE, WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES, AND CREATION OF GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY COMPOSED OF ALL THREE FACTIONS, AMIN NEVERTHELESS SEEMED SOMEWHAT OPTIMISTIC. INTER ALIA, HE FELT THAT U.S. LETTER WOULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL TO HIM. IN ADDITION, HE IS WARNING AFRICAN LEADERS THAT FAILURE TO SUPPORT HIS RECOMMENDATIONS COULD WELL RESULT IN UNILATERAL DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE BY UNITA AND FNLA.

3. U.S.-UGANDAN BILATERAL RELATIONS. AMIN PREDICTABLY RAISED THIS SUBJECT, BUT WITHOUT EXPLICITLY LINKING IT TO GOOD PERFORMANCE ON HIS PART AT OAU SUMMIT WHILE AVOIDING MORE CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, HE MADE STRONG PITCH FOR U.S. TO REOPEN EMBASSY IN KAMPALA AND ASKED LINDSTROM TO RELAY THIS REQUEST TO PRESIDENT FORD. HE SAID THAT FRG AMBASSADOR ELLERKMANN (WHO WAS PRESENT AT THIS MEETING) IS DOING EXCELLENT JOB OF REPRESENTING U.S. INTERESTS, BUT NATURALLY HAS TO GIVE PRIORITY TO INTERESTS OF HIS OWN COUNTRY. THEREFORE, IT WOULD BE VERY USEFUL TO HAVE U.S. AMBASSADOR IN KAMPALA WHO COULD MEET WITH AMIN FROM TIME TO TIME TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS. (EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ON PROS AND CONS OF POSSIBLE REOPENING OF U.S. EMBASSY IN KAMPALA WILL BE SET FORTH IN SEPARATE MESSAGE BASED IN PART ON IMPRESSIONS AND INFORMATION GAINED DURING LINDSTROM VISIT.)

4. U.S. RELATIONS WITH AFRICA. AMIN WAS CRITICAL OF TWO ASPECTS OF U.S. POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA: SOUTH AFRICA AND ARMS ASSISTANCE. RE FORMER, AMIN SAID OUTCOME OF OAU SUMMIT DELIBERATIONS COULD BE FAVORABLY AFFECTED IF USG
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WERE AT THIS TIME TO ISSUE STRONG STATEMENT CONDEMNING APARTHEID AND SUPPORTING MAJORITY RULE THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN AFRICA. ON ARMS, HE SAID THAT WILLINGNESS OF COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND CORRESPONDING RELUCTANCE OF U.S. TO PROVIDE ARMS TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAD BEEN MAJOR REASON FOR MARKED GROWTH IN COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN AFRICA. AMIN SAID THAT A LIBERAL U.S. ARMS SUPPLY POLICY WOULD MAKE "90 PERCENT" OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES PRO-AMERICAN. "WE IN

UGANDA WENT TO USSR FOR ARMS BECAUSE I COULDN'T GET THEM FROM U.K. OR U.S."

5. AMIN THE MAN. DURING MEETING AMIN GAVE IMPRESSION OF BEING VERY SECURE IN HIS POSITION, IN EXCELLENT HEALTH, AND COMPLETELY CONFIDENT OF HIS ABILITY TO DEAL WITH INTERNATIONAL ISSUES WITH LITTLE STAFF SUPPORT. ASIDE FROM GERMAN AMBASSADOR AND LINDSTROM, ONLY OTHER PERSONS PRESENT DURING MEETING WERE TWO MEMBERS OF DEFENCE COUNCIL WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS. AMIN WAS CORDIAL, FRIENDLY, AND RELAXED THROUGHOUT MEETING WHICH LASTED ONE HOUR. HE COMPREHENDED AND SPOKE ENGLISH CONSIDERABLY BETTER THAN HAD BEEN EXPECTED ON BASIS OF AMERICAN EMBASSY KAMPALA REPORTS OF TWO TO THREE YEARS AGO. AMBASSADOR ELLERKMANN CONFIRMED THAT IT IS GENERAL OBSERVATION OF KAMPALA DIPLOMATIC CORPS THAT AMIN'S FACILITY IN ENGLISH HAS IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY DURING PAST TWO YEARS. MOREOVER, AMIN, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECT OF OAU CHAIRMANSHIP, DISCUSSED INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ISSUES IN AFRICA WITH MORE SOPHISTICATION THAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED OF HIM IN EARLIER TIMES. FOR WHAT IT MIGHT BE WORTH, AMIN SEVERAL TIMES IN MEETING STRESSED HIS ANTI- COMMUNISM AND PRO-WESTERN PREFERENCES AS WELL AS HIS DISENCHANTMENT WITH LIBYA. HOWEVER, GIVEN FACT HIS ERRATIC BEHAVIOR ON INTERNATIONAL SCENE WAS MANIFEST AS RECENTLY AS LAST OCTOBER (BY HIS U.N. SPEECH), IT WOULD BE FOOLHARDY TO CONCLUDE THAT A NEW AMIN HAS EMERGED. PERHAPS IT WAS JUST ONE OF HIS GOOD DAYS, BUT AT LEAST IT'S NICE TO HAVE HIM SUPPORTING US FOR A CHANGE. MARSHALL

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